

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-4, 7-11, 14-17, 20, and 22-25 are pending. Claims 5 and 21 are cancelled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 6, 12, 13, 18, and 19 were previously cancelled. Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 20, and 25 are amended. Claims 1 and 20 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claim 25 is allowed and claims 5 and 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In response, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 5, and independent claim 20 has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 21. Therefore, independent claims 1 and 20 are in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 4, 9-11, and 14-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Houser et al. (U.S. 5,606,609);

claims 1-4, 7-11, 14-17, 20, and 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Moore (U.S. 6,246,778) in view of Houser et al. and further in view of Smith et al. (U.S. 6,052,669).

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These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As mentioned above, but while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 5, and independent claim 20 has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 21. Dependent claims 5 and 21 have been cancelled.

Therefore, independent claims 1 and 20 are in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 25 has been allowed by the Examiner.

The Examiner will note that independent claim 25 and dependent claims 2, 7, 8, and 10 have been amended merely to place them in better form by consistently using the wording "determination means" in the claims.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) are respectfully requested.

All pending claims of the present application (claims 1-4, 7-11, 14-17, 20, and 22-25) are now in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

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All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

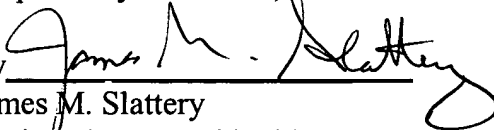
Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) respectfully petition(s) for a one (1) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$120.00 is attached hereto.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Dated: July 7, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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